

The Forestry Commission

Gender Equality Scheme

2010 – 2013

External Consultation Paper

# Gender Equality Scheme – External Consultation

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Forestry Commission's (FC) second Gender Equality Scheme. The first covered the period 2007–2010. Accordingly, the FC's Diversity Team has taken this opportunity to revise and update the content of the Scheme and its Action Plan.

As a result, it is considered that this Scheme helps the FC meet its moral, social and legal obligations by putting equality and diversity at the heart of everything we do, including how we plan and deliver our customer services and treat our staff.

In line with all other public bodies, the FC is governed by the duties and responsibilities of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Equality Act 2006, which provide the legislative basis for gender equality policies in Great Britain. This means that the FC has legal requirements to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender and gender reassignment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and promote gender equality when carrying out functions and activities. These are generally referred to as the general duty to promote equality and diversity.

To help us meet these general duties, we have specific duties to comply with. This includes the production and publication of either three separate schemes for race, disability and gender or one multiple equality and diversity scheme that covers all strands of diversity.

The FC has decided that it will continue to produce three separate schemes until it considers that the equality and diversity agenda is robustly embedded and mainstreamed throughout the organisation. However, with regard to Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) the FC will assess across all six equality and diversity strands. The current strands or protected characteristics are race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion/belief.

Therefore, our Gender Equality Scheme sets out what we will do throughout England, Scotland and Wales to meet the general and specific gender equality duties, extending our remit to include race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion/belief in respect of the EqIA process.

The Scheme is linked not only to our business and strategic plans but also our Human Resource strategies, reflecting our dual role of being a service provider and employer.

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## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The Gender Equality Scheme contains a detailed Action Plan. From this our main priorities for action can be summarised as follows:

- Continue to assess the impact of our policies through the EqIA process in order to ensure that the needs of both women and men are fully considered;
- Continue to develop the profile of the Forestry Commission as an employer in order to widen the field of applicants for traditionally perceived male roles such as foresters, machine operators, mechanics and engineers, and female roles such as administration and education;
- Continue to develop our Senior Leaders of the future, focussing on creating a fair gender balance, through implementation and delivery of development training, programmes and partnerships, including consideration of new mentoring and Leadership Development programmes;
- Continue to review the membership of our Public Appointments, and encourage people from diverse groups to participate and increase the range of ideas, insights and experience available to our decision making;
- Continue to encourage and support our National, Regional and local teams to provide services that promote gender equality, and tackle other issues such as improving health and promoting social and/or cultural inclusion;
- Monitor results of statistical analysis carried out to establish whether or not those people who take Career breaks, women who take Maternity breaks and those who work Flexible Working Patterns, have equality of opportunity in career progression;
- Monitor all contract types and investigate further should any ongoing trends start to appear, to ensure that there is no gender bias;
- Continue to monitor the take-up of staff training, both internal and external, and explore with the Learning and Development team the types of courses on offer to ensure that a wide range of development opportunities are offered to both male and female employees;
- Consider further promotion of flexible working options, particularly targeted to male staff; and,
- Consider delivery and promotion of tools to assist staff to promote health and achieve a good work/life balance.

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## DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

This Gender Equality Scheme has been compiled by the Diversity Team after consideration and review of Schemes produced by other Government Departments to discern best practice.

## FORMAT OF THE GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

The Scheme is structured in the following way:

- Foreword
- Introduction
- The Forestry Commission's Structure
- Approach to the Scheme
- Our customers
- Our staff
- Our approach to Equality Impact Assessments
- Our approach to procurement
- Our approach to monitoring and evaluation
- Progress reporting
- High priority actions
- Assessment of functions and policies
- Employment Monitoring Data
- Equal Pay Data
- Action Plan.

## SUMMARY

All of us at the Forestry Commission have a role to play in putting our Gender Equality Scheme into practice. As such, we need our staff, customers and potential customers to let us know their views of what we are doing and how we are doing it.

Your views on our proposals are important to us. Please take some time to consider the contents of our draft revised Scheme and let us know what you think about the areas we have prioritised for action.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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## CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Invitation to comment on the Forestry Commission's draft Gender Equality Scheme.

Please send your views and comments via e-mail or letter to the address below [by 2 August 2010](#).

Contact address/numbers:

E-mail: [diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

Letter: **Diversity Team  
Forestry Commission  
Silvan House  
231 Corstorphine Road  
Edinburgh  
EH12 7AT**

If you have any queries, please contact Rhondda Salmond on 0131 314 6267.

You are welcome to comment on all aspects of the proposed Gender Equality Scheme. However, we have provided a series of detailed questions on which we would appreciate your comments, outlined in this consultation document. When you respond it would be helpful if you could indicate clearly the specific questions to which your answers relate. Where possible please provide an explanation and examples to support the comments made.

This consultation can be viewed online [here](#).

### **Handling your response**

We need to know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please complete and return the attached Consultee Response Form as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately.

If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and will treat it accordingly.

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All respondents should be aware that the Forestry Commission is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

## **Next steps in the process**

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, these will be made available on the Forestry Commission consultation web pages by end November 2009.

We will check all responses where agreement to publish has been given for any potentially defamatory material before placing them on the website.

## **What happens next?**

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered, along with any other available evidence, to revise as appropriate the draft Gender Equality Scheme.

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the address above.

Responses should reach us by no later than [2 August 2010](#). Earlier responses would be most welcome.

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## CONSULTEE RESPONSE FORM

RESPONSE FORM FOR THE CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE FORESTRY  
COMMISSION'S REVISED GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

RESPONDENT DETAILS:

**Name:**

**Organisation:**

**Address:**

**Telephone/Fax/E-mail:**

PLEASE RESPOND BY 2 August 2010, TO:

**Name:** Diversity Team

**Organisation:** Forestry Commission

**Address:** Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT

**E-mail:** [diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

Please tick this box if you are requesting non-disclosure of your response:

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## 1. THE FOLLOWING AREAS HAVE BEEN PRIORITISED FOR ACTION:

- Continue to assess the impact of our policies through the EqIA process in order to ensure that the needs of both women and men are fully considered;
- Continue to develop the profile of the Forestry Commission as an employer in order to widen the field of applicants for traditionally perceived male roles such as foresters, machine operators, mechanics and engineers, and female roles such as administration and education;
- Continue to develop our Senior Leaders of the future, focussing on creating a fair gender balance, through implementation and delivery of development training, programmes and partnerships, including consideration of new mentoring and Leadership Development programmes;
- Continue to review the membership of our Public Appointments, and encourage people from diverse groups to participate and increase the range of ideas, insights and experience available to our decision making;
- Continue to encourage and support our National, Regional and local teams to provide services that promote gender equality, and tackle other issues such as improving health and promoting social and/or cultural inclusion;
- Monitor results of statistical analysis carried out to establish whether or not those people who take Career breaks, women who take Maternity breaks and those who work Flexible Working Patterns, have equality of opportunity in career progression;
- Monitor all contract types and investigate further should any ongoing trends start to appear, to ensure that there is no gender bias;
- Continue to monitor the take-up of staff training, both internal and external, and explore with the Learning and Development team the types of courses on offer to ensure that a wide range of development opportunities are offered to both male and female employees;
- Consider further promotion of flexible working options, particularly targeted to male staff; and,
- Consider delivery and promotion of tools to assist staff to promote health and achieve a good work/life balance.

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1. ANY COMMENTS ON THE PRIORITY ACTIONS?

2. DO YOU THINK THESE ARE THE CORRECT AREAS TO BE FOCUSSED ON?

3. WOULD YOU PREFER US TO FOCUS ON OTHER AREAS, AND IF SO, WHAT ARE THESE?

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4. DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ON WHEN, WHERE AND HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE US TACKLE OUR SUGGESTED AREAS OF PRIORITY OR YOUR ALTERNATIVE AREAS OF PRIORITY?

5. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS YOU WOULD LIKE US TO LOOK INTO?